

1.3 APPROACH

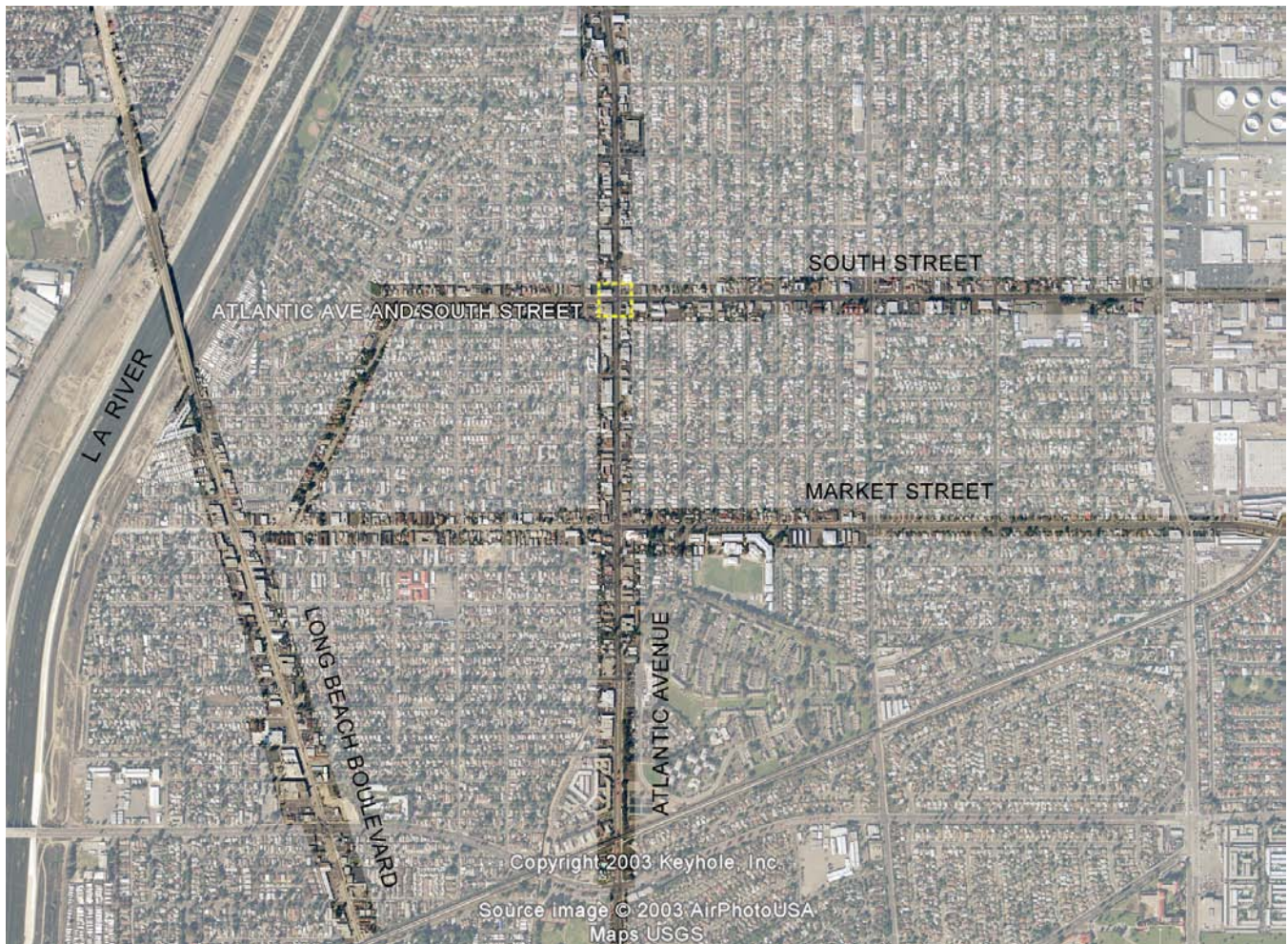


The Village Center and the Historic Node shown as the centers of North Long Beach

Two fundamental questions arose at the beginning of the Implementation Plan process. The first question was: How do we distinguish the Village Center and the Historic Node from their surroundings and make them distinct places? Posed in another way: How will you know that you have arrived in either place? The second question was: What are the policies and actions that will strengthen the Village Center and the Historic Node and what plan will make them best serve the North Long Beach community?

An assumption of the Implementation Plan is that the Plan would follow and incorporate recommendations contained within the North Long Beach Strategic Guide for Redevelopment (Strategic Guide) and the North Long Beach Street Enhancement Master Plan (Master Plan). One of the primary recommendations of the Strategic Guide was that the Village Center and the Historic Node are genuine centers for the neighborhoods of North Long Beach and that both should be strengthened and given highest priority for expenditure of resources available for North Long Beach.

Both the Village Center and the Historic Node are located along wide, north-south streets that are continuous commercial corridors, Long Beach Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue respectively. Currently in many parts of Long Beach, wide streets are zoned for continuous commercial land uses and the result has been that the character of the streets are often repetitive and undistinguished in architecture, landscape and signage. Long Beach Boulevard and Atlantic Avenue have such a condition



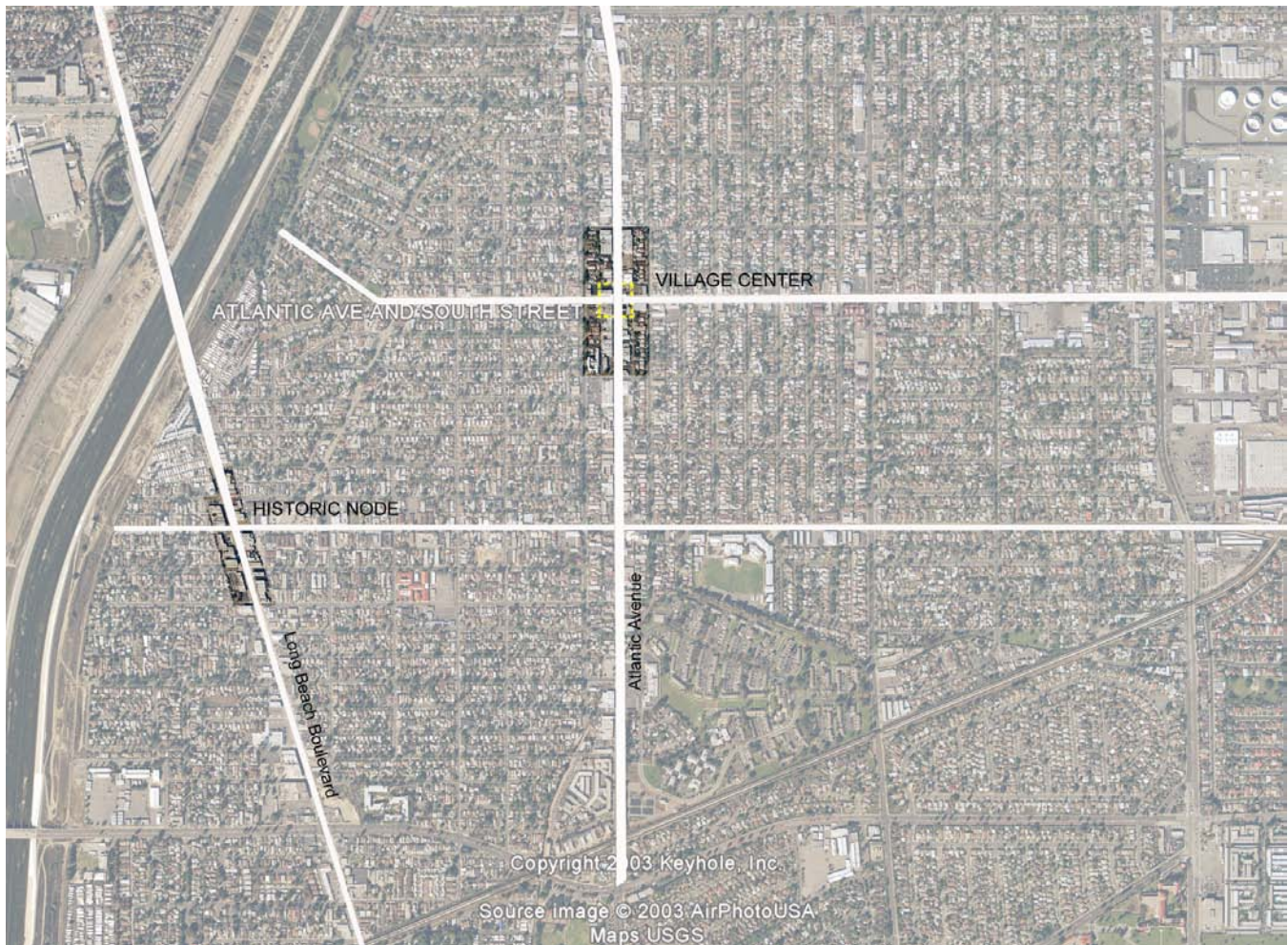
Continuous commercial development that currently exists along major streets in North Long Beach

along much of their length. Therefore, critical elements of the Implementation Plan are to concentrate commercial and community uses in the Village Center and the Historic Node, not continuously along all major streets, and to adopt design strategies to recognize and enhance the unique features of the Center and the Node. This may involve relocation of existing successful businesses from along the corridor into the node.

In public meetings, community comments and suggestions were sought as a way of defining uses and features that people wanted to see in these areas.

In order to capture and augment the strengths of the Village Center and Historic Node, the two areas were studied to determine a clear urban design strategy for walkability, streetscape design, traffic patterns, parking locations, building character, and potential sites for infill development. In addition, aspects of implementation include marketing ideas, the possibility of business improvement districts, façade improvement programs, historic recognition and documentation, and other programs.

The Village Center and Historic Node are considered to be the hearts of the community. However, they differ in the sense that the Village Center is intended to be the cultural, commercial and social heart of the larger North Long Beach area, while the



Historic Node and Village Center are emphasized as the centers of North Long Beach through implementation policies and actions

Historic Node, which is formed around the preservation of historic buildings, caters primarily to the local needs of its surrounding residents. Physically, the Village Center conjures up an image of two and three - story buildings, tree-lined sidewalks with cafes, small neighborhood shops that cater to local needs, restaurants and other cultural amenities that draw people from the larger North Long Beach Area to the Center. The Historic Node in contrast, conjures up an image of local establishments that serve the needs of the neighboring ethnic community, set in the context of historic buildings amidst an enhanced streetscape. In essence, both the Village Center and Historic Node are intended to be pedestrian environments where buildings open up to the public realm and the continuous rhythm of small buildings and shops make walking a pleasant experience.

Specifically for the Village Center, the programmatic fulcrum on Atlantic Avenue is a branch library and a community center. This dual center is to be complemented by coffee shops, cafes and the numerous small retail establishments that line the street edge along Atlantic Avenue. With restaurants, neighborhood retail, some professional office space, and perhaps residential uses on the upper levels, the mix of activity and buildings could result in a viable, active and successful Village Center for all of North Long Beach.

Specifically for the Historic Node, the major actions for implementation include the preservation and renovation of historic buildings and a streetscape design, which increases walkability on a heavily trafficked Boulevard.